

**From:** [Ribordy, Michael](#)  
**To:** [Behnke, Kristina](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Could you send the press release not sure I saw it  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 12, 2017 9:19:59 AM

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From HQ EOC

**Report of Incident Notifications**

**Region 5, U.S. Steel Hexavalent Chromium Release, Portage, IN (NRC# 1175399):** On April 11 at approximately 09:30 CT, U.S. Steel Corporation discovered a green discoloration in the water near an outfall at their facility and discharging into Burns Waterway (or Burns Ditch) in Portage, Indiana. The investigation into the cause and volume of hexavalent chromium released is still underway. The release is still ongoing at the outfall. Indiana American Water in Ogden Dunes, the nearest municipal water source, shut down their intake. The intake is still shut down at this time with water reserves struggling. The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), National Park Service and Indiana American Water were on scene. Out of precaution, the National Park Service has shut down the nearby lakefront and beaches. EPA also notified local water intakes in Gary, East Chicago, and Ogden Dunes. Three EPA Region 5 OSCs are on site along with START contractors taking water samples upstream of the outfall, at the outfall, and downstream of the outfall. Two samples were also taken at the nearby Indiana American Water intake and wet well. The highest concentration of hexavalent chromium in the samples detected at the outfall was 949 parts per billion (ppb). The samples taken at the American Water intake and wet well were non-detections for total chromium.

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**From:** Behnke, Kristina  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 12, 2017 9:14 AM  
**To:** Ribordy, Michael  
**Cc:** Maguire, Andrew ; Reshkin, Karen ; Kelley, Jeff ; Borries, Samuel ; El-Zein, Jason  
**Subject:** RE: Could you send the press release not sure I saw it  
Will do. I'm working on updating now. I got a few pictures from START as well

Kristina Behnke

On-Scene Coordinator

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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**From:** Ribordy, Michael  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 12, 2017 9:14 AM  
**To:** Behnke, Kristina <[behnke.kristina@epa.gov](mailto:behnke.kristina@epa.gov)>  
**Cc:** Maguire, Andrew <[maguire.andrew@epa.gov](mailto:maguire.andrew@epa.gov)>; Reshkin, Karen <[Reshkin.Karen@epa.gov](mailto:Reshkin.Karen@epa.gov)>; Kelley, Jeff <[kelly.jeff@epa.gov](mailto:kelly.jeff@epa.gov)>; Borries, Samuel <[borries.samuel@epa.gov](mailto:borries.samuel@epa.gov)>; El-Zein, Jason <[el-zein.jason@epa.gov](mailto:el-zein.jason@epa.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Could you send the press release not sure I saw it  
Kristina and Andy,  
Talked to Jeff Kelly and he asked that we update the webpage to include the following information

until the 10:30 update. Can you work with Karen Reshkin (3-6353) on updating the public side of the webpage. Before it goes public we will need Jeff and Sam's ok. Thanks

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**From:** Kelley, Jeff

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 12, 2017 9:08 AM

**To:** Ribordy, Michael <[ribordy.mike@epa.gov](mailto:ribordy.mike@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Could you send the press release not sure I saw it

*We sent this statement to reporters who had reached out to us and to congressionals.*

**EPA RESPONDS TO CHEMICAL SPILL AT U.S. STEEL FACILITY IN PORTAGE, IND.**

EPA is responding to a chemical spill at the U.S. Steel facility in Portage, Ind. This morning, the company reported a wastewater discharge to the Burns Waterway, within 100 yards of Lake Michigan. EPA has determined that the wastewater contains hexavalent chromium, a toxic byproduct of industrial processes. EPA is working with the company to contain the spill. At this time, it's not known how much has been spilled.

EPA is monitoring the waterway and Lake Michigan. This sampling does not show that the hexavalent chromium has reached Lake Michigan. EPA will continue to monitor and will provide updates as needed.

EPA is working closely with U.S. Steel and federal, state and local partners. In an abundance of caution, the nearest municipal water source, the Indiana American Water in Ogden Dunes, has shut down its water intake and will use reserve water. Also, the National Park Service has temporarily closed two beaches at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (see <https://www.nps.gov/indu/index.htm> for more information).

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**Jeff Kelley**

*Director, Office of External Communications*

*U.S. EPA Region 5*

*ph: 312-353-1159*

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**From:** Ribordy, Michael

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 12, 2017 9:07 AM

**To:** Kelley, Jeff <[kelley.jeff@epa.gov](mailto:kelley.jeff@epa.gov)>

**Subject:** Could you send the press release not sure I saw it

Mike Ribordy, Chief

Emergency Response Section #3

U.S. EPA Region 5

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